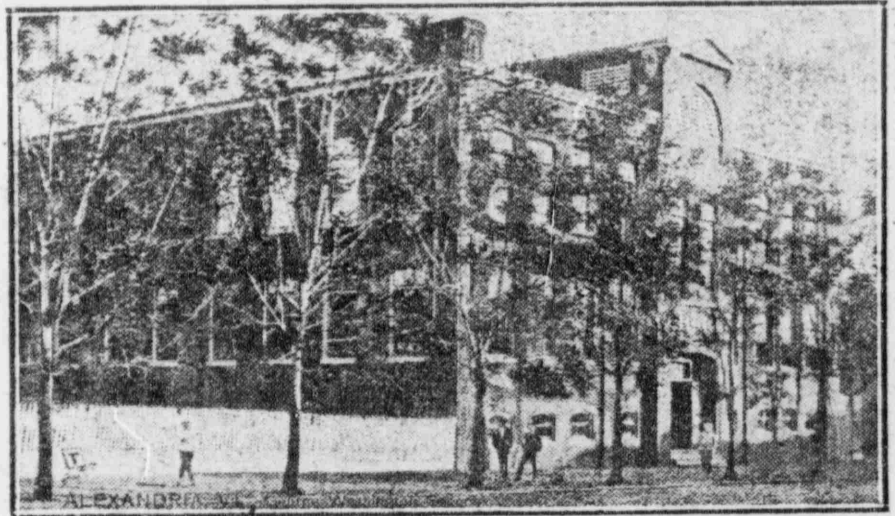


Custom-house and Post-office.



George Washington School.

## COMMERCIAL ALEXANDRIA

By J. T. PRESTON,

Secretary-Treasurer of Chamber Commerce.

The history of commercial organizations in this city is an interesting one. It begins shortly after the war, when manufacturing and business generally were at a low ebb. The various movements and resulting organizations took various forms and names, each serving their day and time, but were more or less spasmodic in their efforts and effects.

The need of an effort based on broader and more permanent lines was felt, and during the summer of 1906 this feeling crystallized into the organization of a chamber of commerce composed of twenty-six of the leading wholesale merchants, manufacturers, and professional firms of the city and one bank, with W. A. Smoot, Jr., president; J. T. Johnson, vice president, and J. T. Preston, secretary-treasurer. These officers continued until January, 1909, when J. T. Johnson became its president, and at his death, which occurred recently, A. D. Brockett was elected for the unexpired term, with R. S. Jones, vice president. The board of directors is as follows: G. S. French, John Leadbeater, Charles King, Carroll Pierce, Worth Hulfish, C. S. T. Burke, T. C. Smith, W. A. Smoot, Jr., H. Kirk, Jr., W. B. Smoot, G. D. Hopkins, A. D. Brockett, J. Y. Williams, J. M. Duncan, and E. E. Lawler.

Working quietly, but as a unit, the influence of the organization made itself felt in every effort that was put forth

for the good and advancement of the city. Movements that before had lagged because of apparently insurmountable obstacles now met and overcame the obstacles, thereby crowning these efforts with success. As a consequence, the organization steadily grew, until now it represents in its membership all of the banks and nearly all of the wholesale merchants, manufacturers, and prominent men of the city.

Although since May, 1907, there has been a time of financial depression, the chamber of commerce has inaugurated new movements in various lines and located manufactures. It has been instrumental in locating eight industries in and around the city, and has carried to a successful conclusion many movements for the improvement of our streets, sidewalks, harbor, &c. Prominent among these are the improvement of King street extended, from the city line to Mount Vernon avenue, at Rosemont, which has just been completed at a cost of nearly \$20,000, and the securing of an appropriation of \$60,000 from the government to remove a bar from the river in front of the city, which seriously menaces the business interests of our harbor; a bulkhead is being constructed across the cove between Jones Point and Agnew's ship-yard, and the mud dredged from the bar will be pumped

therein, thereby reclaiming several acres of land heretofore worthless, and converting it into valuable sites for industries, &c.

The organization was incorporated under the laws of Virginia in 1909.

Feeling the necessity for the organization of the entire business interests of the city, the chamber of commerce, in January of the present year, began the movement which has resulted in the formation of the Retail Merchants' Association, Inc., of Alexandria, Va., which has a membership of nearly 100 of the most prominent retail merchants in the city, and is rapidly growing—an organization which is accomplishing a great deal of good, and is a valuable auxiliary in the work of the chamber.

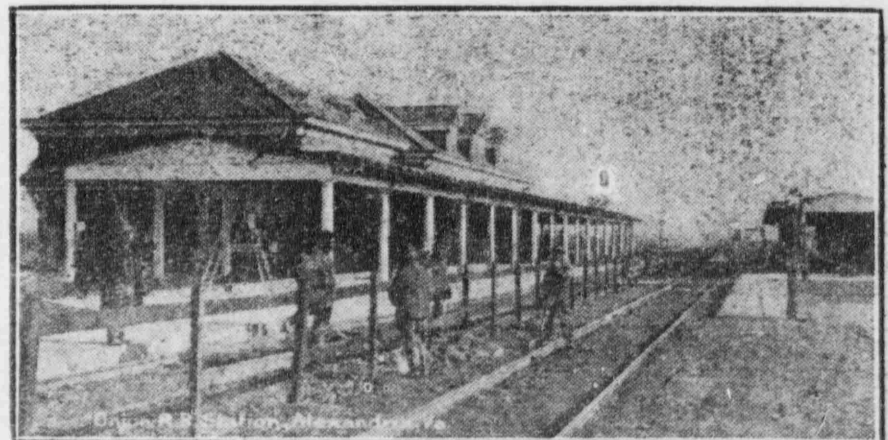
A bureau of credits and collections has been operated for several years, and has proved to be very helpful to the business interests of the city.

Thousands of dollars have been saved by the checking and adjustment of freight rates and other transportation matters.

To sum it up, the success of the organization lies in the words "unity and co-operation," and its ambition is that its history can ever be traced in the improvements to our city and the addition to and the upbuilding of our industries and business houses.



Braddock House.



Union Railroad Station.